IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for processing and tracking requests for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) using a web-based computer system configured with at least one server which includes an employee FMLA database, the system including a plurality of client systems networked to the at least one server, said method comprising the steps of:

displaying on a first client system at least one web page including a FMLA leave request form;

prompting a requester to enter request data directly into the FMLA leave request form, the requester including at least one of an employee and a representative of the employee, the request data including information relating to a reason for a FMLA leave request, a name of the employee and a name of an employer, wherein the first client system is associated with the requester;

automatically uploading the FMLA leave request form with the request data from the first client system to the server, wherein the server is associated with the employer;

determining, at the server, whether the employee is eligible to receive a conditional approval of the FMLA leave request form;

automatically downloading the conditional approval from the server to the first client system for viewing by the requester;

automatically downloading the conditional approval and a medical certification form to a second client system associated with a medical provider identified by the requester;

displaying on the second client system at least one web page including the conditional approval and the medical certification form;

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prompting the medical provider to enter medical data directly into the medical certification form displayed on the second client system, the medical data including a recommendation relating to the reason for the FMLA leave request;

entering the medical data directly into the medical certification form by the medical provider via the second client system;

automatically uploading a completed medical certification form from the second client system to the server for storage in the FMLA database;

comparing, at the server, the request data entered by the requester to the medical data entered by the medical provider, to determine and determining whether the reason provided by the requester for the FMLA leave request corresponds with the recommendation provided by the medical provider; and

transmitting from the server a final approval or disapproval to the requester at the first client system after performing the data comparison at the server.

2. (original) A method according to Claim 1 further comprising the step of tracking employee leaves, leave requests, and leave time remaining for employees under the FMLA.

3. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading the FMLA leave request form further comprises the step of uploading employee personal data and employee company data.

4. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading the FMLA leave request form further comprises the step of uploading a reason for the requested medical leave.

5. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading the FMLA leave request form further comprises the step of uploading a type of medical leave requested.

6. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading the FMLA leave request form further comprises the step of completing the form on the requesting employees behalf.

7. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading a completed medical certification form further comprises the step of uploading a recommendation from the medical provider relating to the reason for the requested medical leave.

8. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 7 wherein said step of uploading a recommendation from the medical provider relating to the reason for the requested medical leave further comprises the step of uploading a type of medical leave deemed appropriate by a medical care provider.

9. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading a completed medical certification form further comprises the step of uploading medical care provider recommended dates and times for a leave.

10. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading a completed medical certification form further comprises the step of uploading a signature stamp of a medical care provider.

11. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading the FMLA leave request form further comprises the step of accepting FMLA leave request information over a telephone by at least one of a voice responsive system where a user enters spoken FMLA information and a menu system where a user enters requested FMLA information using the touch keys of a telephone.

12. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 1 wherein said step of automatically uploading a completed medical certification form further comprises the step of accepting FMLA information over a telephone by at least one of a voice responsive system

where a medical care provider enters spoken FMLA recommendation information and a menu system where a medical care provider enters an FMLA recommendation using the touch keys of a telephone.

13. (currently amended) A system for facilitating processing and tracking of requests under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), said system comprising:

a first computer associated with a requester, the requester including at least one of an employee and a representative of the employee;

a second computer associated with a medical provider identified by the requester;

a server associated with an employer further comprising:

an employee FMLA request database; and

a plurality of FMLA forms designed to accept data relating to a request for a leave under the FMLA; and

a network connecting said server to said computers, said server configured to:

display on the first computer the plurality of said forms including a FMLA leave request form,

prompt the requester to enter request data directly into the FMLA leave request form including information relating to a reason for a FMLA leave request, a name of the employee and a name of the employer,

receive the FMLA leave request form with the leave data from the first computer,

determine whether the employee is eligible to receive a conditional approval of the FMLA leave request form,

automatically download the conditional approval to the first computer for viewing by the requester,

automatically download the conditional approval and a medical certification form to the second computer,

display on the second computer the conditional approval and the medical certification form,

prompt the medical provider to enter medical data directly into the medical certification form displayed on the second computer, the medical data including a recommendation relating to the reason for the FMLA leave request,

receive a completed medical certification form containing medical data directly entered into the medical certification form by the medical provider from the second computer for storage in the FMLA database,

compare the request data entered by the requester to the medical data entered by the medical provider to determine whether the reason provided by the requester for the FMLA leave request corresponds with the recommendation provided by the medical provider, and

transmit a final approval or disapproval to the requester at the first computer after performing the data comparison.

14. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server and said computers are configured to allow the requester to submit the leave request via the Internet.

15. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server and said computers are configured to allow the requester to submit the leave request via an Intranet.

16. (original) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said network is one of a wide area network and a local area network.

17. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server is further configured to track employee leaves, leave requests, and leave time remaining for employees under the FMLA.

18. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server is further configured to upload and store in said database employee leave requests.

19. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 18 wherein said server is further configured to upload and store employee personal data and employee company data.

20. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 18 wherein said server is further configured to upload and store a reason for the requested medical leave.

21. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 18 wherein said server is further configured to upload and store a type of medical leave requested.

22. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 18 wherein said server is further configured to allow a third person to upload a leave request form on the requesting employees behalf.

23. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server is further configured to upload a completed medical certification form.

24. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 23 wherein said server is further configured to upload a reason for the requested medical leave.

25. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 24 wherein said server is further configured to upload a type of medical leave deemed appropriate by a medical care provider.

26. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 23 wherein said server is further configured to upload medical care provider recommended dates and times for a leave.

27. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 23 wherein said server is further configured to upload a signature stamp of a medical care provider.

28. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server is configured to download a medical certification form to a named medical care provider.

29. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server is configured to send to an employee at least one of a conditional approval and a medical certification form to an employee requesting leave.

30. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server is configured to accept FMLA leave request information over a telephone by at least one of a voice responsive system where a user enters spoken FMLA information and a menu system where a user enters requested FMLA information using the touch keys of a telephone.

31. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 13 wherein said server is configured to accept FMLA information over a telephone by at least one of a voice responsive system where a medical care provider enters spoken FMLA recommendation information and a menu system where a medical care provider enters an FMLA recommendation using the touch keys of a telephone.

32.-35. (cancelled)

36. (currently amended) Apparatus for processing and tracking of requests under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), comprising:

means for storing a plurality of FMLA forms;

means for displaying on a first client system at least one FMLA form including a FMLA leave request form;

means for prompting a requester to enter request data directly into the FMLA leave request form, the requester including at least one of an employee and a representative of the employee, the request data including information relating to a reason for a FMLA leave request, a name of the employee and a name of an employer, wherein the first client system is associated with the requester;

means for automatically uploading the FMLA leave request form with the request data from the first client system to a server, wherein the server is associated with the employer;

means for determining whether the employee is eligible to receive a conditional approval of the FMLA leave request form;

means for automatically downloading the conditional approval from the server to the first client system;

means for automatically downloading the conditional approval and a medical certification form to a second client system associated with a medical provider identified by the requester;

means for displaying on the second client system the conditional approval and the medical certification form;

means for prompting the medical provider to enter medical data directly into the medical certification form displayed on the second client system, the medical data including a recommendation relating to the reason for the FMLA leave request;

means for entering the medical data directly into the medical certification form by the medical provider via the second client system;

means for automatically uploading a completed medical certification form from the second client system to the server for storage;

means for comparing at the server the request data entered by the requester to the medical data entered by the medical provider to determine whether the reason provided by the requester for the FMLA leave request corresponds with the recommendation provided by the medical provider; and

means for transmitting from the server a final approval or disapproval to the requester at the first client system after performing the data comparison at the server.

37. (previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 36 wherein said means for storing a plurality of FMLA forms comprises at least one server.

38. (original) Apparatus according to Claim 37 wherein said servers is further configured to track employee leaves, leave requests, and leave time remaining for employees under the FMLA.

39. (cancelled)

40. (currently amended) A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for processing and tracking requests for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), said program comprising a code segment that:

displays on a first client system at least one web page including a FMLA leave request form;

prompts a requester to enter request data directly into the FMLA leave request form, the requester including at least one of an employee and a representative of the employee, the request

data including information relating to a reason for a FMLA leave request, a name of the employee and a name of an employer, wherein the first client system is associated with the requester;

automatically uploads the FMLA leave request form with the request data from the first client system to the server, wherein the server is associated with the employer;

determines at the server whether the employee is eligible to receive a conditional approval of the FMLA leave request form;

automatically downloads the conditional approval from the server to the first client system for viewing by the requester;

automatically downloads the conditional approval and a medical certification form to a second client system associated with a medical provider identified by the requester;

display on the second client system at least one web page including the conditional approval and the medical certification form;

prompts the medical provider to enter medical data directly into the medical certification form displayed on the second client system, the medical data including a recommendation relating to the reason for the FMLA leave request;

receives the medical data entered directly into the medical certification form by the medical provider via the second client system;

automatically uploads a completed medical certification form from the second client system to the server for storage in the FMLA database;

compares at the server the request data entered by the requester to the medical data entered by the medical provider to determine whether the reason provided by the requester for

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the FMLA leave request corresponds with the recommendation provided by the medical provider; and

transmits from the server a final approval or disapproval to the requester at the first client system after performing the data comparison at the server.

41. (original) A computer readable medium according to Claim 40 further comprising employee personal data and employee company data.

42. (original) A computer readable medium according to Claim 40 further comprising a record of a reason for the requested medical leave.

43. (original) A computer readable medium according to Claim 40 further comprising a record of completed medical certification forms.

44. (cancelled)